



CALL TO ACTION

We Keep Each Other Safe: A Community Forum to Organize Alternatives to Policing on Algonquin Territory (Ottawa)

Date: Sunday, June 28, 2020

Time: 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

REGISTER TO SPEAK at the forum here: <https://forms.gle/nPvHVGfu5AwBx5Lx8>

WATCH ONLINE on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)

ORGANIZING TOOLKIT:

CONTEXT

Recent murders of Black and Indigenous people have left so many of us in a state of mourning and rage. Many of us are looking for ways to protect and support one another beyond this moment. The last few weeks are fueling and giving urgency to the longstanding call to defund and abolish police who in Ottawa receive \$358 million in funding, more than the budget allocated to transportation, libraries, and public health combined (\$316 million). These conversations have led to countless discussions between friends and family about the need for a community-led alternative to policing. While these struggles and discussions are not new, we can use this moment to move forward and build an abolitionist movement that protects us all and creates the communities of care in which safety is not based on state violence or the threat of state violence. No one should be in a position where they are forced to call the police to protect their loved ones when encounters with police officers are harmful and fatal in many cases. We cannot keep paying for a militarized force that targets, harms, injures, and kills the people we care for.

This call to action is for an online community forum (i.e. community meeting) to discuss creating community-led alternatives to policing in Ottawa. This forum is open for all members of the community to listen and learn as the discussion unfolds. Still, the forum will limit participants in the conversation to folks that sign-up and have been reviewed in order to prioritize the insights and demands of those most often targeted by policing. This process accounts for potential supporters of the police and other racist trolls.

This forum is for those living in Ottawa, which is the unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin People.

IMAGINING COMMUNITY-LED ALTERNATIVES TO POLICING

Community-led alternatives to police would serve as strategies to limit the influence and power of police in our community without relying on politicians to do what is right. These alternatives will be based on anti-racist, decolonial, gendered, and intersectional approaches. Leaders throughout history, most notably Indigenous communities, the Black Panther Party, and others fighting for self determination have organized alternatives, like what we envision in this call to action. Today, we see impactful examples like the Bear Clan Patrol (see a link to their website below) serving communities in Winnipeg where policing claimed and continues to claim countless lives of Indigenous Peoples through their actions and inactions.

During this pandemic, communities across Ottawa have responded to the COVID-19 crisis by creating massive mutual aid projects that are feeding, housing, and providing resources to people without the support of the government. We are already proving that we can take care of each other outside of government structures. We need to build on these solidarity projects to create communities that can support its members and hold them accountable without the use of violence

An alternative to policing would require community members to develop, deliver, and receive adequate training and to mobilize resources to ensure people who are doing this work are also cared for. These pieces of training can include, but not be limited to, mental health, first aid, crisis intervention, non-violent communication, suicide intervention, naloxone training, police observing, and gender-based and sexual violence disclosure and support. We can use online platforms to host facilitated conversations with volunteers interested in participating in the discussion and partner with trusted organizations to develop and deliver training.

WHAT WILL WE DISCUSS AT THE FORUM

1. How do you define safety, safe communities, and safe spaces?
2. What makes you unsafe?
3. What does a world without police mean to you?

4. What would community-led alternatives to policing need to include and promote accountability, effectively meet the needs of community members, and transform relationships and structures of power to enhance our collective well-being and safety?
5. How can we centre racial, economic, gender, sexual, disability, environmental and other forms of social justice, along with the principles of universal access, in these community-led alternatives?
6. What do we need to consider when we are engaging volunteers and participants that would serve as respondents to calls for support? What kind of training should we provide to volunteers? What trusted community organizations can support this training?
7. How can we prioritize the safety and well-being of people participating in community-led alternatives?
8. What do we need to consider when bringing together a group of people responsible for creating alternatives to policing? Who needs to be reflected in the group of people working on creating these alternatives?
9. How should this group of people make decisions and engage the public?
10. How do we make sure these alternatives are sustainable?

If you have additional questions for consideration, please include them at the end of the registration form.

WHO SHOULD SIGN-UP TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FORUM

You should sign up to participate in the forum if you want to respond to the questions listed above.

We must be prioritizing the voices of people that are most often targeted by police and state violence and oppression. These voices include, but are not limited to: people who are affected by colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, poverty, criminalization and anti-immigrant laws, policies, and practices; people who live with a disability/disabilities; people who are living with mental illness(es); people who experience homelessness; and people who use drugs. We ensure that no one is left behind when we make decisions considering those of us that are most at risk of violence. We ask that people in positions of power and privilege consider amplifying and supporting the voices of communities that need this support.

We must create space for a diversity of experiences. This forum values all levels of experience and expertise. This forum will prioritize Ottawa neighborhoods that are targeted by mass surveillance and policing.

Everyone that signs-up to participate in the forum will receive a response explaining whether you will be able to join or not. If we deny your registration, we will attempt to offer some explanation.

HOW TO JOIN THE FORUM

Complete the registration form linked below. We will send invitations to the forum by email once we have had an opportunity to go through the list of registrants. You will be able to join the discussion using your computer or by dialing in using your phone. If you require anonymity during the forum, you can select that option on the registration form.

HOW THE FORUM WILL BE ORGANIZED

People who register will be scheduled to share their thoughts on the questions listed above. Each participant will be given between five (5) to eight (8) minutes to share their thoughts.

There will be three panels of eight people each that represent the voices and experiences we are attempting to prioritize. Each panel will last approximately fifty (50) minutes. These panels will listen to the participants who are sharing their thoughts and provide feedback and help guide the conversations.

We will publish the list of panelists on June 25, 2020 along with their scheduled block for the forum.

A NOTE ON ACCESSIBILITY

It is imperative that we are centering disability justice in this work. We are currently working on making the following considerations:

- American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and closed captioning will be made available
- For folks without access to computers or the internet, we are looking to provide resources and support to ensure participation

If we require additional accommodations to ensure your participation, please indicate those needs on our sign-up form linked at the end of this document.

HOW INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WITH CAPACITY CAN SUPPORT

To ensure that people can participate in this forum, we will need your support:

- Please identify the needs of people in your community to be able to participate in this discussion and let us know how we can ensure participation from members of your community.
- You can provide access to computers and the internet for people without access.
- You can support simultaneous translation solutions for the forum and any materials that follow.
- We require funding to pay for ASL interpreters and third-party captioning.
- Publicly endorse the forum from your organization.
- Crosspost the livestream on your Facebook pages

Please see our [Organizing Toolkit](#) for detailed information on how to support.

WHAT WILL FOLLOW THIS FORUM

We will share a recording and transcription from the forum online. The recording will be accompanied by an action plan and an announcement of the working groups that will be tasked with moving forward to create this alternative. We will organize a follow-up event in early to mid-July if the number of speakers requires it.

PARTICIPATE IN THE CONVERSATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow the discussion on social media using [#WeKeepEachOtherSafe](#) leading up to and during the forum. Feel free to respond to the questions posted above or share resources for people in your community to help imagine a world without police.

REGISTER FOR THE FORUM HERE

Please use [this form](#) to sign-up for the forum. We will be closing the registration on June 24 at 10:00pm.

Registration Form: <https://forms.gle/pq1ky85tPkz53Une7>

ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

This call to action was released by the *Criminalization and Punishment Education Project*. We are a group of activists, people with lived experience of incarceration, family members of criminalized persons, students, and professors who are organizing campaigns and working in solidarity with people affected by criminalization and punishment to alleviate the pain caused by incarceration in the short and medium term, while working to build safe and strong communities without the use of human cages, punishment, and violence. We are committed to the complete abolition of oppression and violence in all its forms as a long-term vision.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES COLLECTED

Defund the Police Email Zap Tool

<https://cp-ep.org/defundpolice/>

Bear Clan Patrol

<https://bearclanpatrol.org/>

Sandy Hudson: Defunding The Police Will Save Black And Indigenous Lives In Canada

https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/defund-police-canada-black-indigenous-lives_ca_5ed65eb2c5b6ccd7c56bdf7d

Critical Resistance Chart: Reformist Reforms vs abolitionist steps in policing

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59ead8f9692ebee25b72f17f/t/5b65cd58758d46d34254f22c/1533398363539/CR_NoCops_reform_vs_abolition_CRside.pdf

Report: Freedom to Thrive: Reimagining Safety & Security in Our Communities

<https://populardemocracy.org/news/publications/freedom-thrive-reimagining-safety-security-our-communities>

The Pandemic Is the Right Time to Defund the Police

<https://newrepublic.com/article/157875/pandemic-right-time-defund-police>

No More Cop Unions <https://newrepublic.com/article/157918/no-cop-unions>

Police Unions and the Problem of Police Misconduct

<https://reason.com/2020/05/30/police-unions-and-the-problem-of-police-misconduct/>